1:Nimuendajú E-5 (1941-1942) 1952
SQ20 Tucuna SQ20

of canoe warriors, they had a culture noticeably superior to that of the Tukuna, who in many ways were influenced by them. According to Padre Samuel Fritz, in 1691 they inhabited twenty-three villages, situated exclusively on islands of the Rio Solimões, between 67 and 72 degrees longitude. The Tukuna called them a'/vane ("of water"; *awa*, the Omágua name for themselves).

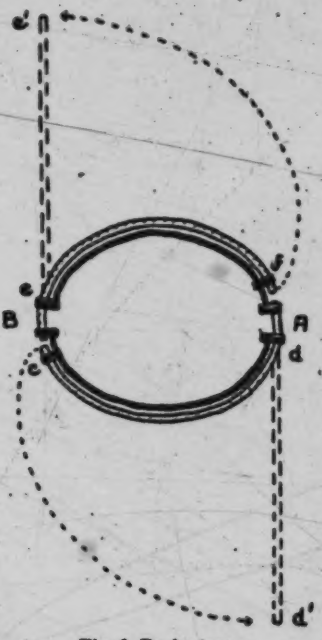

Fig. 9. Booby trap.

Myths of the culture hero brothers tell of the first appearance of the Omágua (p. 128). In a different way the same subject is referred to in the legend of mẽta'rẽ and va'i'či'kị (p. 145). There is no report of a Tukuna attack on the Omágua islands, because in the old days Tukuna navigation was still very primitive. They limited themselves to defense when attacked in their igarapés, and to eventual pursuit of the enemy to the banks of the Solimões. Legends and tradition contain many references to these battles: witness the following.

The Tukuna descended the Igarapé de São Jeronymo and, arriving at the mouth, blew their horns. Then the Omágua came up the igarapé in their dugouts just as the Tukuna were gathered for a feast in a large maloca which used to be at dyumaritị', on the left bank of the igarapé, just above the mouth of the mai'a-tị. After capturing and killing the Indian who had gone to invite his comrades to the celebration on his return trip, they attacked the maloca where all were gathered. In the same hour, however, the Tukuna from the upper igarapé arrived to take part in the feast also and, seeing what was taking place, immediately fell upon the Omágua, killing them all. One of these, already wounded by a poisoned lance, still wished to steal one of the uariciána statues and dragged it to the steep bank. There his strength left him, and he, together with the

1:Nimuendajú E-5 (1941-1942) 1952
SQ20 Tucuna SQ20

648 status, rolled over the edge and disappeared with it in the waters of the igarapé. Even today the
173 song of the drowned statue may be heard sometimes.
726 All the Tukuna now gathered together at dyumaritʲ, awaiting the Omágua. They came two days later in great numbers and attacked with arrows. The battle was hotly disputed, the warriors standing sometimes ankle deep in blood. The Tukuna killed many Omágua on the battlefield and killed others during the retreat; those who escaped foundered in the whirlpool at the mouth of Igarapé de São Jeronymo and were drowned.

At the battlefield the earth became spongy with the worms feeding on the bodies, and sank; [the depression] may still be seen there today. The worms were later transformed into little acarí fish.

648 Another time, the Omágua assaulted a festive gathering of the Tukuna, this time
726 far up the Igarapé de São Jeronymo in the vicinity of Igarapé dyu′/na. At the mouth of the Igarapé de São Jeronymo, the Tukuna had placed guards, who repelled the Omágua while these were fighting the crosscurrents at the mouth of the igarapé.

713 Once, the Tukuna set up an ingenious booby trap (fig. 9) at one of their own
726 houses at which they expected an attack. Anticipating the arrival of the Omágua, they cut two assahy palm trees with thin and very elastic trunks, fifteen to twenty centimeters in diameter, so long that they stretched from one of the two doors of the house to the opposite one. On the outside of the house they tied one of the trunks (*c–d*) firmly at the posts of door A in a horizontal position a meter and a half above the ground; they tied the other trunk (*e–f*) at the posts of door B in the same way. They then bent trunk *c–d*, pressing it against the outer house wall, and held it at point *c*, beside door B, with a loop of cipó passed through the wall. In the same way they set trunk *e–f*, bending it and securing it at *f*. This completed, all shut themselves inside the house to await the arrival of the enemy.

Espying the Omáguas' approach through cracks in the house wall, they waited until the enemy were all inside the yard and surrounding the house, and then they cut the cipós simultaneously at *c* and *f*. Tied now only at one point, the elastic trunks, with a strong backlash, returned to their normal straight positions, *d–d′* and *e–e′*, knocking down and wounding many of the enemy.

727 Unlike the Omágua, the Tukuna never took prisoners or kept trophies from the enemy dead.